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Current Support Brief

SOVIET CONSCRIPTION OF PLANTS TO PRODUCE CHEMICAL EQUIPMENT

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SOVIET CONSCRIPTION OF PLANTS TO PRODUCE CHEMICAL EQUIPMENT

A proposal to conscript the services of a number of plants, including defense plants, in order to supplement the present inadequate production of chemical equipment in the USSR now appears to have the endorsement of Gosplan. Writing in the Party newspaper Pravda, the Chairman of the State Committee for Chemical and Petroleum Machine Building named nine of the plants that would be called on in this backstop effort. Two of the nine are shipyards that have been heavily involved in naval programs and other defense production, three are plants that have been important producers of conventional armaments, and the others named include two that produce railroad equipment and two that produce heavy industrial machinery. It is unlikely, however, that any of the plants will be assigned exclusively to production of chemical equipment.

All nine plants have the production equipment and possess a general familiarity with the materials and manufacturing techniques associated with production of various types of chemical equipment. Although they may be familiar with the general technology, the interruption of established production patterns, new material requirements, and new lines of technical and administrative guidance will prove to be disruptive. Even existing plants that specialize in chemical equipment have been hampered by delays in the provision of working designs for equipment, and this problem would affect the new plants as well. Nevertheless, recent shortfalls in the program to construct new capacity for producing chemical equipment have intensified the pressure to divert production capacity from other uses.

1. Background

In December 1963, Khrushchev announced plans for a massive chemical program designed to raise production of synthetic fibers and plastics and to stimulate lagging agricultural output by increasing production of fertilizer. The chemical program calls for an increase of 55 percent in production of chemical equipment during 1964-65 1/ compared with an increase of 20 percent during 1962-63. Faced with this task, the Chairman of the State Committee for Chemical and Petroleum Machine Building, Kostandov, * has recommended the use of a number of

* In a move that does not appear related to the plans to divert production capacity to production of chemical equipment, Kostandov was replaced by Konstantin Brekhov on 24 January 1964.

plants that previously had engaged in little or no production of chemical equipment. 2/ In designating nine of the plants (of an unspecified total), he indirectly provided evidence of the types of production that will be affected by the high priority attached to Khrushchev's chemical program. The designated plants are as follows: in the Leningrad area, the Baltiyskiy Shipyard, the Admiraltiyskiy Shipyard, and the Bol'shevik Plant; in the Urals-Volga Region, the Izhevskiy Machine Building Plant and the Barrikady Plant (Volgograd); in the Ukraine, the Novo-Kramatorsk Machine Building Plant and the Zhdanovskiy Machine Building Plant; in the Central European Region, the Lyudinovo Diesel Locomotive Building Plant; and in East Siberia, the Krasnoyarsk Heavy Machine Building Plant.

The plants that have been named fit into two general classifications: (a) plants associated with the defense industry and (b) important heavy machine building plants and railroad equipment plants. The suggested plan would shift some capacity from production of ships, conventional armaments, transportation equipment (especially railroad equipment), and general heavy machine building (including metallurgical equipment) to production of chemical equipment. It is unlikely, however, that any of the plants will be assigned exclusively to production of chemical equipment.

2. Plants to Be Conscripted

The three plants in Leningrad all have some degree of military association. Two are prominent shipyards -- the Baltiyskiy and Admiraltiyskiy shipyards. As is customary with shipyards, they have large machine shops that have produced a wide variety of civilian and military products, largely on a custom or small-lot basis. The Bol'shevik Plant has been a major arms plant -- in the past producing artillery pieces and more recently probably producing naval or coastal defense-type missiles.

The two plants located in the Urals-Volga Region also have a high degree of military association. The Izhevskiy Machine Building Plant named by Kostandov probably is Plant 74, the main plant of a complex that has been a major producer of small arms but also has produced such diverse items as machine tools and delivery motorcycles. The Barrikady Plant in Volgograd was formerly a large artillery plant and still performs some work on military orders. More recently it has diversified its production and now is a major supplier of drilling equipment.

The Novo-Kramatorsk Machine Building Plant is one of the largest heavy machine building plants in the USSR. An interplant computer center is being installed there, and the plant already works in close cooperation with other plants in the Donbas area, some of which will be producing chemical equipment. The Krasnoyarsk Heavy Machine Building Plant is a large and versatile plant well located to assist the expansion of the chemical industry in Siberia. As heavy machine building plants, each of these plants normally would produce equipment for metallurgy, the extractive industry, the chemical industry, and a number of other industries.

The remaining two plants have specialized in producing railroad equipment. The Lyudinovo Diesel Locomotive Building Plant, located about 50 miles north of Bryansk, is a producer of diesel switch engines. The Zhdanovskiy Machine Building Plant, near the Ukrainian coast of the Black Sea, is a major producer of railroad cars, especially tank cars. The plant produces other heavy equipment such as converters, kilns, and furnaces and once participated in the production program for T-34 tanks. The plant has worked in cooperation with the Novo-Kramatorsk Machine Building Plant.

3. Production Capability of the Conscripted Plants

All nine plants have the production equipment and possess a general familiarity with the materials and manufacturing techniques associated with producing various types of chemical equipment. The two heavy machine building plants mentioned possess the large handling and machining capacity required for production of chemical equipment. Forming equipment of such plants includes large-size, heavy-duty machinery that can be used in producing filters, blowers, low-pressure tanks, and associated equipment. The forges in the plants can be used for producing high-pressure equipment such as valves, pumps, and compressors. In addition, shipyards and railroad tank car plants possess large bending rolls that can be used to produce chemical tanks and storage equipment. The weapons plants would be useful in producing some components such as the smaller sizes of centrifuges, centrifugal pumps, mixers, and plastics forming machinery.

Increased production of chemical equipment in these plants to a considerable extent will utilize capacity that formerly had been used for other purposes. The heavy machine building plants probably possess some unused large-size machine capacity, however, because it is almost

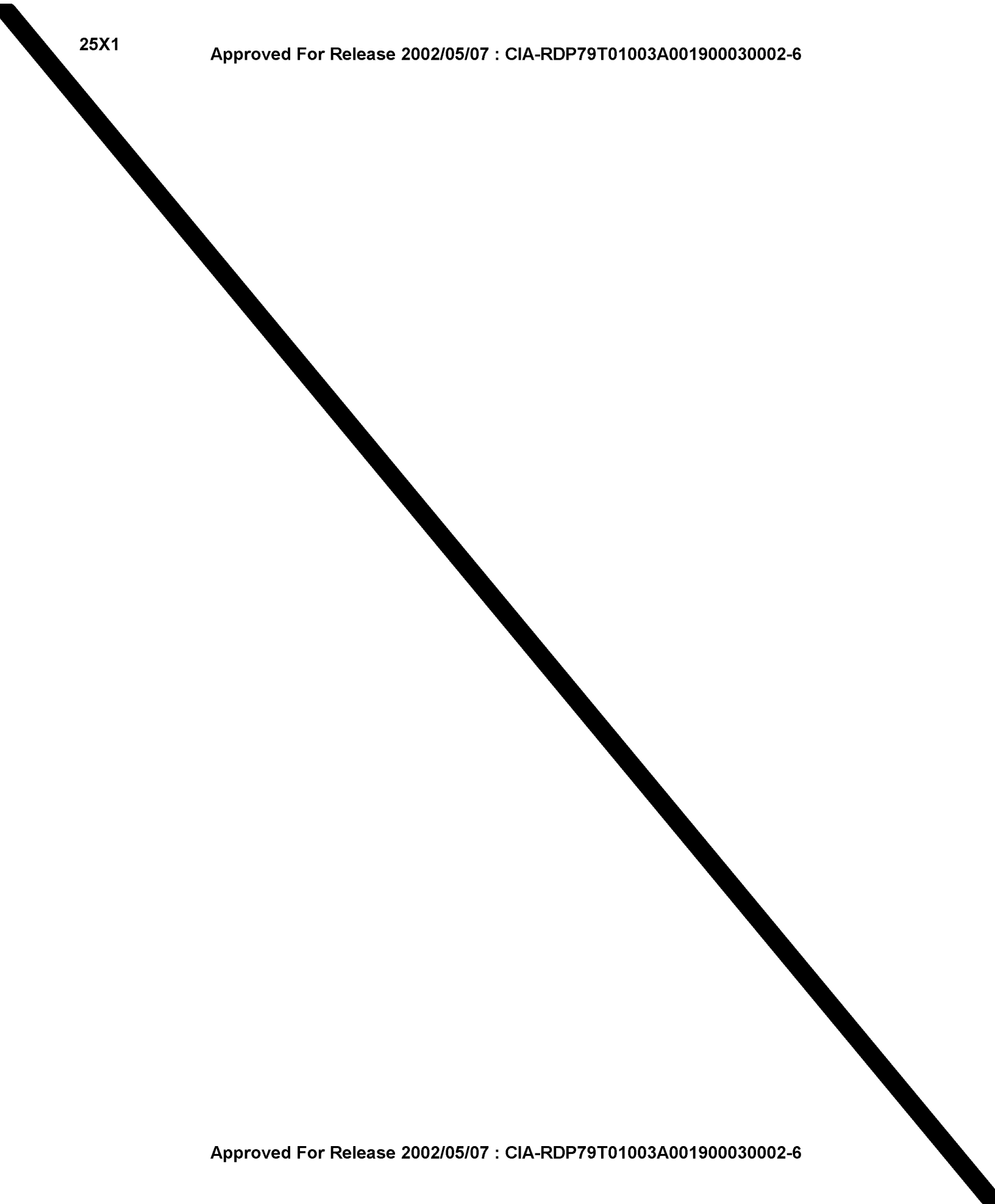
impossible to schedule work so that all facilities are in constant use. Given the necessary raw materials and labor, these plants will be able to use idle capacity for producing limited quantities of very heavy components and unusually bulky components that are required in some types of chemical equipment without cutting back on other production.

4. Prospects

All of the plants, however, probably will experience difficulties as chemical equipment is placed into production. Although they may be familiar with the general technology, the interruption of established production patterns, new material requirements, and new lines of technical and administrative guidance will prove to be disruptive. Even existing plants that specialize in chemical equipment have been hampered by delays in the provision of working designs for equipment, and this problem would affect the new plants as well.

Although the partial diversion of such plants, possibly only temporary, to production of chemical equipment would appear to be a violation of the recent Soviet stress on the importance of strict adherence to plant specialization, this doctrine has never been rigidly applied to types of equipment if production is on a small-lot basis, as is true of many types of chemical equipment. Furthermore, the hectic pace of the chemical program was expected to require the drafting of "outside" plants according to Soviet plans formulated as early as in 1958. However, competing priorities until now have prevented much diversion, even though production of chemical equipment has fallen far behind orders.

The conscription of "outside" plants, if adopted, is planned to supplement the production drive in chemical equipment, but Soviet statements make it clear that the bulk of the increase in production during 1964-65 is expected to come from existing chemical equipment plants and from new specialized plants being built. 3/ It is obvious, however, that the program for construction has lagged so seriously that much new capacity will not be operative on schedule during 1964 and 1965 and that the aid of "outside" plants may be more important to meeting present production targets than Soviet statements now imply.



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18 February 1964

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FROM : Chief, Publications Staff, ORR

SUBJECT : Transmittal of Material

It is requested that the attached copies of CIA/RR CB 64-8, Soviet Conscription of Plants to Produce Chemical Equipment, January 1964, Secret, be forwarded as follows:

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ACTION COMPLETED
The dissemination requested by this memorandum has been completed.
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